



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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Pesticide survey coming to Puget Sound residents

OLYMPIA –In an effort to learn more about how the average urban resident uses pesticides on a day-to-day basis, the [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) and the USDA [National Agricultural Statistics Service](#) (NASS) will be mailing surveys to more than 15,000 homeowners around the Puget Sound region to gather data on the pesticides they use and how they use them.

The three-page survey will be mailed within the week to people living in the 12 counties making up the Puget Sound region. All the information gathered will be kept strictly confidential and the response can be returned in self-addressed envelopes provided.

The survey was prompted by [a 2011 study](#) conducted by the [Department of Ecology](#) (Ecology), which identified urban use of agricultural products as a potentially significant source of copper to freshwater and marine areas in the Puget Sound basin. Copper is a component of many common pesticides and is toxic to fish and other aquatic species. Young salmon, in particular, are especially susceptible to the effects of copper.

While the state has data about pesticide use in agriculture areas, little is known about pesticide use by homeowners. WSDA and Ecology are taking this opportunity to learn more about all pesticide uses in urban areas rather than just collect information on products containing copper.

Ecology partnered with WSDA on this project, providing \$135,000 in funding for three surveys. The survey to homeowners is the first. A second survey will focus on commercial pesticide applicators in the Puget Sound region and the third will gather the same information from municipalities, public works agencies, school districts and other public operators that use pesticides.

Together, the three surveys are expected to result in a better understanding of how certain pesticides end up in the region's waterways and help develop effective outreach and education programs.

A report detailing the results of the survey is expected to be completed by Dec. 31, 2013.

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